(a) whether the Union Government has notified any new rules for CRF (State Roads) in 2007;

(b) whether issues regarding feasibility of these rules which causes delay in implementation of projects have been raised by the States;

(c) whether necessary steps are being taken by Government for releasing the amount in time; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. One-third of the annual accrual of CRF is placed at the disposal of each State/UT as reserve for utilization against sanctioned works. This reserve fund is replenished by subsequent releases on submission of utilization certificates by concerned States/UTs.

Setting up of welfare fund

743. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to set a welfare fund for overseas stranded workers in gulf countries;

(b) the number of stranded workers in gulf countries separately;

(c) the number of stranded workers require immediate rehabilitation, country-wise; and

(d) whether it is a fact that the semi skilled and unskilled workers contribute a whopping $12 billion annually in remittance to India?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) A proposal to establish an 'Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)' to provide funding support to the Indian Missions in the Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) Countries for the welfare of the workers who are in distress is under consideration of the Government.

(b) and (c) There is no data available regarding the number of stranded workers at a given time in various gulf countries. However, whenever overseas Indian workers are stranded the Missions provide necessary assistance to such workers, including for their deportation back to India.

(d) India is the highest recipient of remittances from abroad which was estimated at over US $27 billion in 2007. About 40% of this is the estimated remittances received from overseas Indian workers including from semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the gulf.

Widening of NHs in Orissa

744. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has sanctioned funds for road widening for the busiest NH-215 in Orissa;